

EXHIBIT 6



BALTIMORE POLICE DEPARTMENT



STEPHANIE RAWLINGS-BLAKE
Mayor

February 6, 2013

ANTHONY W. BATTS
Police Commissioner

SB 281

TO: Members of the Senate Judicial Proceedings Committee
FROM: Anthony W. Batts, Police Commissioner
RE: Senate Bill 281-Firearms Safety Act of 2013
POSITION: **SUPPORT**

Chairman Frosh, Vice-Chair Gladden and Members of the Committee, please be advised that the Baltimore Police Department **supports** Senate Bill 281.

Senate Bill 281 proposes a comprehensive package of reforms to include a ban on military-style assault weapons, limiting the capacity of magazines, establishing licensing requirements to include background checks; mandatory fingerprinting; and safety training, a reduction in the allowable magazine capacity size from 20 to 10 rounds, and will expand the definition of who is prohibited from firearms possession due to mental illness and other factors.

Reducing firearm violence and targeting firearms offenders play significant roles in Baltimore's crime fighting efforts and the City's overall violence reduction strategies. Mayor Stephanie Rawlings-Blake has spoken about our recent success in violent crime reduction and her overall approach to crime in Baltimore. Our successes have focused on targeting violent offenders and gun violence. Strong law enforcement partnerships have also been central to our success. Law enforcement cannot do this alone and we need strong legislation to help us achieve these results. A clear message must be sent to criminals that firearm violence and repeat offenses will not be tolerated.

Most of the homicides and non-fatal shootings that plague Baltimore are perpetrated by prohibited persons with illegal guns. Last year 79% of all homicide suspects arrested had prior records and approximately 45% had firearms offenses in their criminal histories. This is a trend that we had been tracking for a period of time. Additionally one of the issues addressed through our GunStat process is the data on repeat gun offenders that shows that many of those charged with violence or firearms offenses have a history of arrests/convictions for crimes involving firearms.

Maryland's most violent offenders keep getting guns and endangering neighborhoods statewide. We must work collectively to prevent prohibited persons from possessing firearms or ammunition. The proposed licensing requirement in SB 281 will require an applicant for a license to participate in training and submit fingerprints so that a comprehensive background

investigation is completed, ensuring that the applicant is not prohibited from possessing a handgun. States like New York, New Jersey and Massachusetts have shown that licensing will also serve as a deterrent to the straw buyers of a handgun. This is particularly true when enacted as part of a comprehensive state regulatory package similar to that proposed today.

Illegal guns also make their way to our streets through the secondary market and as a result of burglary or theft. Last week, the Baltimore Police Department working in conjunction with our federal partners to intercept 29 handguns and ammunition which had been taken in a burglary of a gun store the previous day in Pennsylvania. These guns were headed to the streets of Baltimore certainly affecting countless lives and victims. This speaks to the many challenges faced by law enforcement statewide.

We know by looking at successes in other jurisdictions that this type of legislation can have immediate effects. These are common sense measures and offer additional tools for law enforcement in our efforts to get violent offenders off of the street.

We respectfully request a favorable report on Senate Bill 281.

cc: The Honorable Verna Jones-Rodwell